

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SAA-01 SES-02 PM-05 HA-05
L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 MCE-00 TRSE-00 ACDA-12
NSCE-00 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 SS-15
SP-02 /080 W
-----119031 171236Z /47

O 171155Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3037

SECDEF WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SANA NIACT IMMEDIATE

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO USMTM/DCR RIYADH IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ4/7-SA// IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T JIDDA 6005

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US

SUBJ: SAUDI-U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT FOR YAR

REF: (A) STATE 208508, (B) SANA 3986, (C) SANA 4053, (D) SANA 4055

1. I AM CONCERNED WITH GUIDANCE GIVEN IN REF A. I DOUBT THAT A REPLY CAN BE ORCHESTRATED WITHIN CONSTRAINTS GIVEN WHICH WILL BE IN ANY WAY SATISFACTORY TO SAG. ON CONTRARY, I BELIEVE THAT RESPONSE CONSISTENT WITH INSTRUCTIONS OF REFTEL A, NO MATTER HOW WELL PRESENTED, WILL BE CONSIDERED A REBUFF NOT ONLY TO YAR BUT TO SAG'S EFFORTS AND INTERESTS AS WELL.

2. I APPRECIATE THE POLICY CONCERNS AS WELL AS THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN A MORE POSITIVE RESPONSE TO SAG-YAR REQUEST. HOWEVER, REF D SAYS SUCCINCTLY WHAT IS MY JUDGMENT AS TO OUTCOME IF REFTEL'S INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWED. I BELIEVE, MOREOVER, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN OUR SECRET

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PRESENT RELATIONSHIP WITH SAG AS WELL AS TO DETERMINE FUTURE POLICY WITH RESPECT TO YAR, THE THREE BASIC QUESTIONS POSED IN REF B MUST BE ADDRESSED AND ANSWERED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

3. IF POLICY-MAKERS HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THESE QUESTIONS, I FEEL WE NEED TO KNOW IF THEY ARE GOING TO DO SO OR IF THEY

PREFER TO POSTPONE CONSIDERATION AND DECISION (AND I
RECOGNIZE THERE MAY WELL BE GOOD AND SUFFICIENT REASONS FOR
LATTER COURSE).

4. AS FAR AS EMBASSY JIDDA IS CONCERNED, IT IS NOT YAR
AND YAR DEFENSE PER SE THAT ARE IMPORTANT. I BELIEVE IT
ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN SAUDI CREDIBILITY IN USG AND IN OUR
DESIRE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR NEEDS ON GUT ISSUES.
SAG HAS BEEN RESPONSIVE TO OUR NEEDS ON THE GUT ISSUE OF
SUFFICIENT OIL SUPPLY AT A REASONABLE PRICE. GUT ISSUE
FOR THEM IS SOVIET THREAT. IN FACT, THAT WAS THE ISSUE
THAT UNDERLAY THE F-15 QUESTION. WHAT THEY WANT FROM US
NOW IS SOMETHING THAT LOOKS MORE LIKE A REAL POLITICAL
COMMITMENT THAN A STRAIGHT COMMERCIAL SALE. THUS FAR,
OUR RESPONSE TO YAR PROGRAM HAS LOOKED MORE LIKE STRAIGHT
COMMERCIAL SALE, BOTH IN SIZE AND IN FINANCING. SAG IS
NOT ASKING THAT WE DELIVER MASSIVE SUPPLIES OF ARMS
TOMORROW, NOR THAT WE FINANCE THE ENTIRE PROGRAM. WHAT
SAG WANTS IS POLITICAL COMMITMENT FROM US TO KEEP PACE
WITH THE THREAT. THEY WANT TO FEEL THAT IF MORE EQUIPMENT
IS NEEDED LATER ON, WE WILL BE RESPONSIVE. IN ORDER FOR
U.S. POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO BE CREDIBLE, IT IS ALSO
ESSENTIAL THAT WE UNDERWRITE SOME OF THE COSTS OF THE
MILITARY EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED TO YAR.

5. I WOULD PREFER WAITING UNTIL AFTER RECEIPT OF KING'S
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LETTER TO PRESIDENT TO RESPOND TO SULTAN, EVEN IF RESPONSE
IS BASICALLY NEGATIVE, UNLESS POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT
USG POLICY WILL BE CHANGED IN INTERIM PERIOD SO AS TO
PRODUCE MORE FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM PRESIDENT TO KING
THAN IS INDICATED BY PRESENT INSTRUCTIONS. IN FACT, I
BELIEVE WHATEVER DECISION IS MADE SHOULD BE EMBODIED IN
PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO KING'S LETTER SO AS TO BE CLEAR
AT ALL LEVELS OF SAG.

6. I HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT PRINCE SULTAN HAS ASKED
BG CATHEY TO COME SEE HIM ON AUGUST 18 AND GIVE HIM ANSWERS
TO QUESTIONS HE RAISED WITH CATHEY ON AUGUST 12. SULTAN
EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD BE HAVING A "VISITOR" FROM YAR IN
COUPLE DAYS FROM NOW. I SUSPECT THAT "VISITOR" IS SALIH
AS PREDICTED IN PARA 11 OF SANA 4054. THIS POINTS UP ONCE
AGAIN IMPORTANCE THAT SAG ATTACHES TO THIS QUESTION.
WEST

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NNN

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